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FM AMEMBASSY CHISINAU  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5933  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

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SUBJECT: With Questionable Tactics, Communists Win Majority on  
Rezina Council

Sensitive But Unclassified. Please Protect Accordingly.

REFS: A) Chisinau 1155, B) Chisinau 990 , C) Chisinau 866

¶1. (SBU) Summary: November 11 district council repeat elections in Rezina saw a shift in power to the Communist Party. This victory was assisted by apparent misuse of state power, threats, and inducements. A disunited opposition is learning some hard lessons as the electorate has begun to signal its displeasure with opposition squabbling and failure to look after the people's business. End summary.

Rezina Goes Narrowly Communist in Repeat Election  
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¶2. (SBU) The raion (district) council elected in June had a narrow majority of 17 non-Communist members to the Communist Party's (PCRM) ¶16. However, it never met, because the PCRM boycotted the first two scheduled sessions, and the non-Communists boycotted the third. Without two thirds of the members present at the first two meetings, and without a simple majority at the third, the electoral code requires new elections. On November 11, in repeat elections, the PCRM added two seats, gaining a majority of 18 out of 33 seats. Other winners, though on the margins, were the Social Liberals (PSL), who increased their seats from four to six, and the National Liberal Party (PNL), which went from none to two. Christian Democrats stayed steady at three. The losers were the Our Moldova Alliance (AMN), which dropped significantly from five to two seats, the Democratic Party (PD), which dropped from three to one, and the Liberal Party (PL) which went from one to none. (See chart below.)

	June 3	November 11
PCRM	16	18
AMN	5	2
PD	3	1
PPCD	3	3
PL	1	0
PSL	4	6
PSD	1	1
PNL	0	2

Opposition Claims Communists Underhanded  
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¶3. (SBU) Opposition figures claimed that the PCRM used the absence of international observers to win the election by underhanded means. According to our contacts, PM Tarlev visited the region on November 8 to make promises of subsidies to communities that voted for the PCRM, and Parliament cancelled its November 10 plenary sitting to allow PCRM deputies to campaign in the district, using their

official cars. In addition, some claimed, the PCRM surreptitiously encouraged eight new fringe parties to participate in the latest round and split the non-PCRM vote-a tactic it used in 2005 parliamentary elections, and was field testing for 2009. An opposition MP told us that President Voronin had summoned all Rezina mayors to his office and demanded that they ensure 60% of the votes for the PCRM.

#### Opposition Recognizes Result of Failure to Unite

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¶4. (SBU) The non-Communist opposition in Rezina, unlike those in some other raions (reftels), failed to unite, and have paid the price. Some councilors, from other non-Communist parties, blame the AMN for demanding more positions than their five councilors warranted, and blocking cooperation by its refusal to negotiate. Perhaps in response to events in Rezina, representatives of opposition parties (AMN, the nascent social democratic alliance, and the PD-PSL alliance) met in Chisinau on November 15 to start negotiations on possible future collaboration. The PPCD did not respond to the invitation.

Comment: So What Else is New?

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¶5. (SBU) Comment: Communists are cheating and the opposition is squabbling rather than administering. Although Moldova's north is its red belt and the swing to the PCRM was small, the swing was enough to give the PCRM a majority, with which it should be able to form a functioning raion council. Such success could encourage the ruling party to try repeat performances, and further exploit opposition failure to create united fronts. In the runup to 2009, these factors could tip the scales back in favor of the PCRM.

Kirby